

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
JACQUES KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET
FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

THE OVAL OFFICE

12:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: This is a splendid thing that you are doing and that France is doing.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Yes, Mr. President. In 1976, the American people will be celebrating the Bicentennial of the independence of their Nation. Of course, the Bicentennial is an American commemoration. That is also an anniversary for France, the anniversary of our relations between our two countries, the anniversary of our participation in the Independence War and the celebration of a friendship, devoted, which has never failed for all of history and has been filled with comments, and advice, and mutual achievements.

And because the people of France are committed to the Bicentennial of the independence of the United States, President Valery Giscard d'Estaing asked me to remit to you a letter presenting the American people with the sound and light spectacle, which in 1976 will take place at Mount Vernon on the site of the historical mansion of George Washington.

We think it was a proper time to make this announcement in the week between Independence Day and Bastille Day.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Ambassador, I want to express appreciation on behalf of all of the American people for this splendid gesture on the part of the French people and the French Government.

Would you express my personal appreciation to your President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, for his interest in this?

I would say that any historian knows that had it not been for the support of France, the United States would not be independent today, and that special relationship is one that we Americans have never forgotten.

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We have always stood by France, and France has always stood by us, and it will continue in the future.

Also, with regard to the sound and light programs, I think you should know that in 1963 I took a trip with my family through various parts of Europe and the Mideast, and I saw a sound and light program in three different places; one in Rome, one also in Athens and another one in Cairo at the Pyramids. It is a splendid concept.

I know that it is primarily due to those French who participated in developing the concept that those programs have been put on and to have one during our bicentennial year, to have it at Mount Vernon, I think, is a fine gift -- we will call it that -- that you can make, you and your people, to the United States.

I think hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Americans will come there to see it, and they will be reminded not only of our independence, but the part France has played in gaining the independence and also of the continued French-American friendship, which is as strong today as it was that day, and will remain so.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Thank you, Mr. President. I will see President Valery Giscard d'Estaing next week. I will bring your message to him.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I will look forward to seeing him sometime in the future.

Thank you.

END (AT 12:39 P.M. EDT)